

COMMUNITY CARE LICENSING DIVISION: TIPS FOR LICENSEES TO PREVENT HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES

- Make sure that the **temperature** in your facility is safe and comfortable.
- Review your facility's **emergency disaster plan**. It should include:
 - Up-to-date emergency telephone numbers.
 - Contingency plans in case the facility's air-conditioning system goes out.
 - An evacuation plan in case residents/clients need to be moved to a motel or other "cooling center."
- Monitor the **television** or **radio** for important local heat-related announcements, and check the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) web site at www.oes.ca.gov for heat-related tips and information on cooling centers statewide.
- Report any heat-related illnesses/deaths to the local licensing office immediately. The elderly, the very young and those with chronic illnesses are at greatest risk.
- Be alert for any changes in clients/residents—physical, mental or emotional—that may indicate a heat-related illness.
- Consider establishing a **hydration station** in the facility, where water and other fluids are always available to clients/residents and staff.
- Contact your **local licensing office** for help with evacuations or other assistance.

General Tips:

- Never leave infants, children or the frail elderly unattended in a parked car.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Don't wait until you're thirsty.
- Dress in lightweight, loose-fitting clothing. Use a hat and sunscreen as needed.
- Drink fruit juice or a sports beverage to replace salts and minerals lost during heavy sweating. (If a client/resident is on a low-sodium diet, check with his/her physician first.)
- During the hottest parts of the day, keep physical activities to a minimum and stay indoors in air-conditioning and out of the sun.
- Use fans as needed.
- Open windows to allow fresh air to circulate when appropriate.
- Use cool compresses, misting, showers and baths.
- Avoid hot foods and heavy meals—they add heat to the body. Eat frozen treats.

Heat Stroke and Heat Exhaustion: **Heat stroke**—which occurs when the body can't control its temperature—may result in disability or death if emergency treatment is not given. **Heat exhaustion** occurs when the body loses a large amount of water and salt contained in sweat.

Warning signs of *heat stroke* vary, but may include:

- An extremely high body temperature (above 103 degrees Fahrenheit, orally)
- Unconsciousness
- Dizziness, nausea and confusion
- Red, hot and dry skin (no sweating)
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Throbbing headache

Warning signs of *heat exhaustion* vary, but may include:

- Heavy sweating
- Muscle cramps
- Weakness
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Paleness, tiredness, dizziness

What to Do: If you see any of these signs for heat stroke or heat exhaustion, you may be dealing with a life-threatening emergency and should do the following:

- Have someone call 911 while you begin cooling the victim.
- Get the victim to a shady area.
- Cool the victim rapidly with a cool bath or shower, or by sponging with cool water, until body temperature drops to 101-102 degrees Fahrenheit, orally.
- If emergency medical personnel are delayed, call the hospital emergency room for further instructions.
- Do not give the victim alcohol to drink.
- Again, get medical assistance as soon as possible.

If a victim's muscles twitch uncontrollably as a result of heat stroke, keep the victim from injuring him/herself, but do not place any object in the mouth and do not give fluids. If there is vomiting, make sure the airway remains open by turning the victim on his/her side.

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This handout is on the CCLD web site at www.cclid.ca.gov. It incorporates information provided by documents prepared by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). In addition to the OES web site at www.oes.ca.gov, please see the CDPH web site at www.dhs.ca.gov or www.cdph.ca.gov for more information.